

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

1-147. (Cancelled).

148. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method, comprising reporting matches to searches initiated by a searcher so long as access control criteria are met, the matches including potential targets satisfying one or more search criteria defined for the searches, and the access control criteria (i) being selectively controllable by any of one or more persons in one or more chains of person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets, and (ii) defining attributes of such said one or more persons and such said one or more persons' contacts that may be shared with others.

149. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein one attribute defined by the access control criteria establishes connection strengths for person-to-person relationships and wherein said search criteria defines a minimum connection strength for a person-to-person relationship that is required between persons forming said one or more chains of person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets.

150. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein at least one attribute defined by the access control criteria comprises an indication of a connection strength for at least one of the person-to-person relationships between persons forming said one or more chains of person-to-person relationships.

151. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein the search criteria include a connection threshold specified by the searcher, the connection threshold indicating a maximum number of person-to-person relationships to be allowed in establishing said one or more chains of person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets.

152. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein the access control criteria comprise a connection threshold indicating a maximum number of person-to-person relationships to be allowed in establishing said one or more chains of person-to-person relationships.

153. (Cancelled)

154. (Cancelled)

155. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein the matches are reported only so long as a connection between each person associated with said one or more person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets satisfies one attribute of the access control criteria established by a next subsequent connector in a connection path between the searcher and the potential target.

156. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein reporting matches to searches initiated by a searcher so long as access control criteria are met further comprises autonomously brokering connections between the searcher and the potential target so as to provide information regarding the one or more persons in the one or more chains of person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets.

157. (Cancelled)

158. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 156, wherein autonomously brokering connections between the searcher and the potential target further comprises brokering, in accordance with one or more instructions supplied by any one or more connecting individuals in an inter-personal connection path from the searcher to a potential target, where such instructions refer to attributes of relationships between any two or more said persons in said chains.

159. (Cancelled)

160. (Cancelled)

161. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein one attribute of the access control criteria determines whether a third party evaluation report is accessible to the searcher, said third party evaluation report (i) pertaining to a person forming a person-to-person relationship connecting the searcher and the potential target, and (ii) being integrated with a personal profile of said person forming a person-to-person relationship connecting the searcher and the potential target.

162. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 161, wherein said third party evaluation report is not accessible to said person forming a person-to-person relationship connecting the searcher and the potential target.

163. (Cancelled)

164. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method, comprising reporting matches to search criteria specified in a search initiated by a searcher so long as the number of person-to-person connections in a chain of at least three persons person to person connections connecting the searcher and a potential target is within a specified connection threshold, the specified connection threshold indicating a maximum number of person-to-person connections to be allowed in establishing said chain of person to person connections connecting the searcher and the potential target, and permission for said reporting is granted by all persons in the chain of at least three person-to-person connections connecting the searcher and the potential target to which each of the matches pertain.

165. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein the specified connection threshold is specified in the search criteria by the searcher.

166. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein the specified connection threshold is established by the potential target.

167. (Cancelled)

168. (Cancelled)

169. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein the matches are searched for according to degrees of trust between contacts specified through user profile criteria.

170. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein reporting matches includes reporting information regarding individuals represented by the matches according to access control instructions provided by those individuals concerning levels of details of their personal information which may be revealed to others.

171. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein reporting matches includes providing a third-party evaluation of the potential target, said third-party evaluation integrated with a personal profile of the potential target.

172. (Previously Added) A computer-implemented method, comprising reporting matches to search criteria specified in a search initiated by a searcher so long as a connection strength

between each two people forming a person-to-person connection in a chain of person-to-person connections between the searcher and a potential target exceeds a connection strength threshold, said connection strength being an attribute of access control criteria that are selectively controllable by any of one or more persons in said chain of person-to-person connections between the searcher and the potential target.

173. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 172, wherein the connection strength threshold is included in the search criteria specified by the searcher.

174. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 172, wherein the connection strength threshold is established by the potential target.

175. (Previously Added) The computer-implemented method of claim 172, wherein the connection strength threshold determines the minimum connection strength required between two people forming a person-to-person connection in a chain of person-to-person connections between the searcher and the potential target.